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SUBJECT: FSC NOVEMBER 19: GEORGIA ISOLATED ON MINISTERIAL
DECISION

11. (SBU) Summary: Georgia could not agree to language in the draft Ministerial decision describing the Security Dialogue discussion of the August conflict. Georgia is willing to continue negotiations. The EU and the U.S. restated their opposition to a Russia proposal for an embargo of heavy weapons to Georgia. Delegations, including Russia, apparently are waiting for instructions on the latest version of a revised Code of Conduct Questionnaire. End summary.

FSC Issues MC.DD

12. (SBU) Georgia (Giorgadze) reported it was unable to join the apparent consensus at 55, including Russia, on the latest revision of the draft Ministerial decision on FSC issues (other than SALW and stockpiles of conventional ammunition) (MC.DD/6/08/Rev.4). Giorgadze said the language in OP1 tic 2 describing the Security Dialogue discussions of the August Russia-Georgia war, "the armed conflict in August 2008," did not capture the fact that these discussions had concerned "armed conflict between, among, or including participating States of the OSCE."

13. (SBU) Giorgadze noted that, although much time in the Security Dialogue had been spent in discussing the April downing of a Georgian UAV over Abkhazia by a Russian fighter, Georgia was not insisting on any reference to this in the decision. However, the reference to the August conflict should be accurate, independent of questions of blame or responsibility for starting the war. Georgia is willing to continue negotiations over the language. The chair indicated it may call an additional meeting before delegations leave for the Helsinki Ministerial.

¶4. (SBU) France (Simonet), on behalf of the EU, reported that it fully supported Rev.4 of the draft decision (FSC.DEL/180/08). Separately, Georgia informed it was almost ready to support a further revision of OP1 tic 2 proposed by the chair that would have deleted all reference to the August conflict, but was dissuaded from doing so by the UK and Germany who believed this would have been conceding too much to Russia.

Russia Charged Georgia with "Over-Politicizing"

¶5. (SBU) Russia (Ulyanov) reported that Rev.4 was acceptable, including the German-proposed OP3 language on 2009 progress reports and the OP1 tic 2 reference to the "armed conflict in August 2008." Ulyanov charged Georgia was trying to "over-politicize" the draft decision by imposing its version of the August events on others. Georgia wanted language that implies the August conflict was exclusively between it and Russia, yet this was "patently untrue." Rather, from its outset and for the last fifteen years, the conflict has been between Georgia and South Ossetia. It was Georgia that chose to escalate this conflict in August by its massive use of force against Tskhinvali. Russia was forced to intervene to reimpose peace and stability in the region.

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¶6. (SBU) Ulyanov conceded that, ideally, "everyone's views" would be reflected in the decision, but this was not realistic. The decision deals with many issues, not just the August conflict, which is why Russia supports the compromise language put forward by the chair. The Rev.4 language does not threaten any of Georgia's security interests and Georgia should not jeopardize and the decision should not be sacrificed because of the Georgia issue.

¶7. (SBU) Switzerland (von Arx) aligned with the EU position. Von Arx noted that the 2009 FSC chairs, France, Georgia, and the UK, will need ministerial guidance. He urged delegations to work for consensus and warned that the FSC discussions could have an impact on the Geneva talks on the Georgia situation. Luxembourg (Pilot) agreed, and observed a good compromise requires both sides to be "equally frustrated."

Cyber Security Workshop Agenda and Modalities

¶8. (SBU) Russia supported the draft agenda and modalities for the March 2009 cyber security workshop. Ulyanov said the document was well-drafted and Russia intended to provide a keynote speaker with further details to follow. Germany (Schweizer) supports the draft in principle although it will provide some drafting suggestions. Germany also will provide a speaker. The U.S. (Silberberg) reported it had provided drafting suggestions to the sponsors and also intended to provide speakers. Austria (Eischer), a sponsor with Estonia and Lithuania, promised to consider all comments and urged participating States to consider extra-budgetary contributions to pay for the workshop.

Arms Embargo on Georgia

¶9. (SBU) Russia (Ulyanov) noted that talks in Geneva on the situation in Georgia led to its proposal for an embargo of to Georgia (FSC.DEL/ 155/08/Rev.1). Concerned states must prevent a destabilizing accumulation of arms that can lead, as they have already, to the outbreak of conflict. Russia wanted to prevent Georgia from acquiring arms that could be used for "offensive" purposes; these were described in OP1 and were drawn from the OSCE Principles Governing

Conventional Arms Transfers and the OSCE Document on SALW. They include: battle tanks, armored combat vehicles, large-caliber artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, and missiles/missile-launchers including MANPADS.

¶10. (SBU) Ulyanov stressed that all participating States needed to fulfill the political commitments reflected in these OSCE documents. Although these were "major" documents, they have not worked well for the last several years as many ps simply do not abide by their principles.

EU: Embargo Unnecessary

¶11. (SBU) France, on behalf of the EU, referred to its earlier statement on the proposal, which declared that the EU complied with OSCE and other international norms pertaining to arms transfers; the embargo was therefore unnecessary

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(FSC.DEL/170/08) .

U.S. Will Continue to Support Georgia

¶12. (SBU) The U.S. (Silberberg), drawing on remarks made by Under Secretary of Defense Edelman and Assistant Secretary of State Fried (PC.DEL/763/08), noted that Georgia, as a sovereign country, should have the ability to defend itself and to deter renewed aggression. The U.S. has provided training and equipment to Georgia to help its counter-terrorist efforts, initially within Georgia and later as part of the multinational coalition in Iraq. The U.S. and NATO had, in the wake of the August conflict, offered Georgia assistance in rebuilding its infrastructure and military. The U.S. will continue to carefully and responsibly consider Georgia's needs in these areas.

¶13. (SBU) Georgia (Giorgadze) agreed with Russia that the region was still tense, but the better response would be for Russia to allow international observers into the regions it and its South Ossetian allies occupy. Russia was itself had broken its political commitments by providing heavy weapons to South Ossetian and Abkhazian separatists. Giorgadze repeated his earlier call for an independent international investigation of the August war and the events leading up to it. He recalled that a UN investigation of the April UAV shoot-down had concluded that a Russian military aircraft was responsible but Russia, despite its avowed support of the UN, still refused to acknowledge responsibility.

Russia Attacks U.S. Position

¶14. (SBU) Russia responded that there was no evidence that Russia had supplied heavy arms to South Ossetia. If it had, Ulyanov reasoned, South Ossetia would not have needed Russia's help in August. No one quibbled with the U.S. assertion that Georgia had a right to defend itself, but Georgia had used its arms instead to commit aggression. Noting that the U.S. had provided counterterrorism training to Georgia, Ulyanov said this proved "the road to hell was paved with good intentions" as Georgia used the training to attack Russian peacekeepers and innocent South Ossetians. Ulyanov repeatedly demanded to know if the U.S. was saying there were some political commitments it need not uphold? As for the UN investigation of the UAV incident, Russia was still waiting for evidence withheld by Georgia.

AIAM Agenda and Modalities

¶15. (SBU) France, the incoming FSC chair, circulated a draft decision for the agenda and modalities of the 2009 Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (FSC.DEL/179/08). Simonet

said that the meeting of Heads of Verification (HOV), held on the eve of the AIAM in 2008, would likely be held at the end of the year as part of the annual information exchange. This change was in response to the request of some pS.

¶16. (SBU) The UK (Gare), concurred with Simonet's schedule proposal and noted it would be the FSC chair in the autumn 2009 session. Switzerland also supported holding the HOV

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meeting late in the year.

Code of Conduct Questionnaire

¶17. (SBU) Only Ukraine commented on the draft update of the Code of Conduct Questionnaire by supporting in full the latest version (FSC.DD/14/08). Separately, the Code coordinator, Colonel Anton Eischer (Austria) told USDEL that he and most delegations were waiting on Russia before deciding how to proceed. U.S. proposals pertaining to question III.1.3 on ensuring public access to information about the integration of armed forces into civil society and use of the word "measures" in the Questionnaire are still under consideration.

MANPADS in Cyprus

¶18. (SBU) The Czech Republic announced it was prepared to assist the Republic of Cyprus in destroying surplus MANPADS. The Secretariat is developing a unified response to Cyprus's earlier request.

SCA Coordinator Report

¶19. (SBU) Lieutenant Colonel Nils Peterson (Denmark), the FSC stockpiles of conventional ammunition coordinator, announced the OSCE and UNDP legal staffs had reached agreement on mechanisms to resolve earlier difficulties in transferring funds between the two organizations when engaged on joint projects. Peterson said this agreement would allow MONDEM (Montenegro demilitarization) joint projects to be completed.

Next Meeting

¶20. (U) The next FSC meeting will be on November 26 and feature Major General Paul Schafer, USAF, the U.S. European Command director of strategy and plans, who will address in the Security Dialogue the command's "Strategy for Active Security."
FINLEY